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19 November 1962

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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8. France: Gaullists take strong lead in first round of National Assembly elections. (*Page xi*)

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*France: The strength shown by the Gaullists in yesterday's first round of the National Assembly elections indicates that De Gaulle's non-Communist opponents will have to rely on Communist support in a number of districts or see a Gaullist landslide in the runoff voting next Sunday.

The 32 percent of the vote won by the Gaullist Union for a New Republic (UNR) is by far the largest percentage won by any single political party in France since the late 1940s.

About 100 of the 482 seats were decided yesterday, as compared to only 43 in the first round of the 1958 elections. The UNR has already secured nearly ten percent of the assembly seats. The Communists' percentage of the vote also was up over their 1958 showing--but still more than 10 percent under their pre - De Gaulle figure.

In yesterday's first round, a majority was required to decide each contest; in next Sunday's runoff, a plurality will suffice.

The high UNR vote probably resulted from three factors: De Gaulle's bitter pre-election attack on the traditional parties; reaction against Socialist leader Guy Mollet's advice to voters to back Communist candidates in order to defeat Gaullists; decision of many voters to maintain the balance of power in De Gaulle's favor after the results of the 28 October referendum were widely interpreted as a personal setback for him.

The other non-Communist parties now face the embarrassing question of Communist support in planning strategy for the runoff. The Communist party

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announced some time ago its intention to withdraw its candidates in districts where left or center candidates in the runoff would thereby stand to beat UNR aspirants. This tactic has been aimed primarily at softening Socialist resistance to cooperation with the Communists, and Mollet's recent statement was probably generated by pressure within his own party for such cooperation.

Similar pressure will likely be generated within other left and center parties as a result of yesterday's vote. Most candidates of the right-wing Independents, however, will insist on staying in the race, even at the cost of forcing three-way contests virtually certain to result in additional UNR victories.

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